

Beautiful Hands.

Beautiful, beautiful hands!  
They're neither white nor small;  
And you, I know, would scarcely think  
That they were fair at all.  
I've looked on hands whose form and hue  
A sculptor's dream might be;  
And these aged, wrinkled hands  
Are most beautiful to me.

Beautiful, beautiful hands!  
Though heart were weary and sad,  
These patient hands kept toiling on,  
That children might be glad.  
I always weep, as looking back  
To childhood's distant day,  
To think how these hands rested not,  
While mine were at their play.

Beautiful, beautiful hands!  
They're growing feeble now;  
For time and pain have left their work  
On hand and heart and brow.  
Alas! alas! the nearing time  
And the sad, sad day to me,  
When 'neath the daisies, out of sight,  
These hands will folded be.

But, oh! beyond this shadow-land,  
Where all is bright and fair,  
I know very well those dear old hands  
Will palms of victory bear  
Where crystal streams, through endless  
years,  
Flow over golden sands,  
And where the old grow young again,  
I'll sleep my mother's hands.

PROSPEROUS, RIGHTEOUS,  
UPRIGHT & CO.

By E. Donald McGregor.

CHAPTER VI.

SEPTEMBER sunshine, bright but with a certain iciness in its smile. A cosy little coffee stall with a pair of coal-oil fires glowing brightly 'neath two cans of steaming coffee, and not far off three dishes loaded high with fresh, toothsome, sugared buns. There you have the back-ground of the picture. Now let me put some figures in the front. A tall boy, freckled, and with a regular mop of bright red hair; a cheery lad with a bright face, and a restless way of moving his hands; up on the counter, with his arms round a shaggy little terrier, a mite of a chap with short yellow curls, and pretty red cheeks. Now you have the picture, and I'm sure you won't need me to tell you what it's called. You recognize Tom, Jinks, Pete and Scrape, and their coffee-stall.

It was nearly a month since Mr. Black had dismissed them for their holiday, and again an interesting matter was up for discussion. Tom it was who started the ball rolling. "Let's put up a sign, an' our names on to it," he said boldly; "we aint half a firm unless we has a name." "Tom, Jinks, and Pete," Jinks announced in very grand style. Then he paused. "That don't sound right—what's up with it?"

"Why the other folks had end-up names like Brown an' Smith an' Kennedy," said Pete. Tom turned suddenly to Jinks. "Jinks," he said, "what's your end-up name?" "I aint got none," Jinks replied. "Well we aint neither," Tom said rather mournfully; "let's get one." Pete looked up brightly; "There's lots of folks' names in the Chart," he said, "let's pick one of 'em." "Good idea," said Jinks approvingly, "why shouldn't we?" "Every one is to have one day to pick out of the Chart the name of the man as he wants to be like," Tom said authoritatively; "let's give Pete the first chance, 'cause he's the littlest," he added.

Three days later this same Tom called the meeting to order. It was three o'clock in the afternoon, and customers were usually scarce at that hour, so very often the boys chose the time for Chart study. Pete was the first to respond to Tom's sharp, energetic—"Names, please." "I knowed right away," he said, "what name I wanted. I've read 'bout Samuel, an' David, an' Paul, an' Peter, but I liked Job best of all." "Oh, I was sure as you'd pick Samuel or David," Tom said in a rather disappointed voice. "No," Pete said firmly, "it was the man as I wanted to be like, an' I want to be like Job. Once you know I had two boils, an' Granma had to fix 'em every mornin', an' oh my, but they was sore, an' yet he behaved himself."

In very incorrect order, Tom called upon himself next. "Mine's Joseph," he said, "an' I'm awful proud of my name." "An' what if folks thinks as you're a son of old Uncle Joseph?" Jinks asked in horror. Uncle Joseph was a man noted for his cruelty to man and beast, and these boys viewed him with positive disgust. Tom was upset for a moment, then he spoke with a certain amount of comfort in his voice. "Well anyway, Pete's just as bad, fer folks, as like as not, will think he's a son of Mr. Job's."

Pete's face clouded over, he could not be a son of the stingy, mean old money-lender. "May be you won't take to mine neither," Jinks said slowly. "I was a-lookin' for David, an' I just opened to a verse as stuck to me. It's in the Proverbs—'A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast.' It just said, 'Jinks, that's the kind of man you wants to be,' an' then I thought 'bout Scrape an' how I knocked a boy down as was plaguin' him, an' how the little chap sort of took to me, an'—well I just made up my mind to be Mr. Righteous when I grewed up." When Jinks made up his mind, it usually stayed made up. He moved slowly but surely. Tom knew this, so he didn't give out his first thought that the name wasn't just a proper one. He sat for once completely silenced. Then slapping one hand on a bare brown knee, he exclaimed:

"Then I'll be Mr. Prosperous, for the Lord said as Joseph was a prosperous man, an' I want to be a prosperous man." Pete asked wonderingly: "What's a prosperous man?" "Why a rich un, I guess, aint it?" Jinks said turning to Tom. "Yes," Tom answered, "it's somethin' of that kind, for Joseph had a ring, an' a gold chain round his neck, an' oh, he was awful grand."

Pete had turned to the Chart, and was carefully turning over its pages. After a few minutes' study, he said cheerfully, "Then I'll give up Job, and just be the kind he was. I'll be Mr. Upright. It says he was 'perfect' too, but I like the sound of Mr. Upright better." Tom began to kick up his heels. "Prosperous, Righteous, Upright and Co.," he shouted gleefully.

"Where's yer Co.?" Jinks interrupted. Tom hesitated, and then feeling Scrape's sharp little teeth pressed playfully upon his feet, he said triumphantly: "Why Scrape of course—you're the Co., aint you, old man?" "An' what's a Co.?" Pete asked in astonished tones. "I don't know, only folks has it, lots of 'em," Jinks answered.

"It's somethin' as ought to be on a sign anyhow," Tom said in a very certain tone of voice. And then the newly christened firm fell to devising ways and means, whereby a real sign-board might be purchased. "Jim Herd will let us have a little board, out of his shop, fer five cents, I know," Tom said. "An' the paint an' brush would be ten cents I reckon," Jinks added.

"Why couldn't we let Jim Herd have coffee an' buns two or three mornin's fer nothin'?" Tom said, a sudden idea coming into his head. "He's one of our customers, an' we could make a trade, an' do things cheap that way." "That would be first-rate," Jinks said in a pleased tone of voice. "An' you paint it, couldn't you, Tom?" Pete said. "Well, I don't know as I could make letters," Tom said hesitatingly, "but if Mr. Herd was to fix me up just a little copy on paper, I believe I could get on somehow. I can try, anyway."

CHAPTER VII.

"I've read every scrap of time I could get, an' I can't see when the Lord Jesus is a-goin' to come—still Mr. Black said as he really would come fer us." It was Jinks' voice, with a troubled note in it. The three boys were on their way to Mr. Black's, for the first time during a long month, and they were talking as they walked. "Why yes, an' you know, we found the very verse, where he said, 'bout the Lord Jesus goin' to prepare a Place, an' th'n comin' back fer us," Pete said. "It seems queer as he's so long gone." "Oh well, it would take a good while to get an extra fine Place ready. I aint worryin'." Tom said comfortably. "I wish we could do somethin' for him when he comes back. I just love him." Pete's voice was eager.

"It would be a queer un as wouldn't love him," Jinks put in rather indignantly. "He says if ye love me, keep my commandments," Tom said, looking quite puzzled. "Why, I never seed that, where is it?" Jinks asked in surprise.

"Right along 'bout his gettin' the Place ready, an' I've been wonderin' what commandments is. I'm sure I'd keep 'em fer him, if I knowed what they was." "I think as it's the things as he tells us to do," Jinks said thoughtfully.

"Well, if that's it, then I'm afraid I don't love him much," Tom said, looking quite downcast. "He says as we're to love folks as hates us, an' how we're not to hit fellers back again, an' one day I thought I'd try it, but I couldn't make it work now."

"Well, I don't see how a feller could do them kind of things," Jinks said wonderingly. "But he says as we can be his friends if we does 'em," Pete said longingly; "an' oh, wouldn't it be nice to have him fer a friend?"

Tom looked at his little brother curiously. "Pete," he said, "honest now, could you help kickin' a feller back, as kicked you?" "I did one day," Pete answered timidly. "Joe Sharp hit me hard, an' fore I thought I just said, 'Lord Jesus, I don't want to hit him back,' an' somehow I found as I didn't have to."

Tom looked puzzled. "It's awful mixed up," he said. "This Chart was to show us the way, an' now the Lord Jesus is a-comin' fer us an' we don't need to know any way. An' of course we love him, an' yet he says as we can't, 'less we do things as we aint able to do."

It was indeed a real tangle to these boys, and when they reached Mr. Black's they told him all about their difficulties. He heard them patiently, then said: "Listen, my boys. Thirty years ago a young man in England left college, to become a minister. He preached for five years, and great crowds came to hear him. Very often of course, he was asked to the homes of his people, and sometimes he found that they had wine on their tables. He just tasted it at first to be sociable and friendly, but after a while he became very fond of it. Then he tried to stop drinking, but the taste and love for liquor had become far stronger than he imagined, and he went down, down, until one night he went into his pulpit drunk. Then his people dismissed him, and he went to a small church in Ireland. For a time he did well; his church became full to overflowing, and he was the most popular minister for miles around. One Wednesday night, the 1st of February, while he was preaching, the thirst for liquor came upon him suddenly, and so powerful was the longing that he rushed from his pulpit, crying out: 'If I knew that a glass of liquor would send me straight to hell I would drink it now.' His congregation thought him crazy, but they never saw him again. He ran straight to the railway station, only stopping to get a glass of whiskey at a neighbouring saloon, and jumping on board a train, he was soon far away. He came finally to America, but before he landed he threw overboard his Bible, saying, 'There I give up God and heaven, and all that kind of thing.' New York hid him so safely that no one of his old friends ever found him. He went into business, and once or twice a year he drank heavily for a few weeks until his thirst was quenched. So the years passed, and every now and then the Lord Jesus, in his great mercy, sent a message to urge this man to get ready for the Place he had prepared for him. He turned them all aside, until one day three little messengers were sent, and somehow or other he couldn't turn them away. He received them and their message, and now he is ready for the Place, whenever the Lord Jesus comes."

Mr. Black paused, then said with a queer shake in his voice: "My lads, I am that man, and you are the little messengers." Jinks stared, Pete slipped off his chair and came and stood beside Mr. Black. As for Tom—he put his hands in his tattered slits that he called pockets, and strode up and down the room. He wanted to cry, but he was afraid it wouldn't be just the thing for Mr. Prosperous to do. At last he stopped in front of Mr. Black, and said abruptly, "I never guessed you was that kind of a man—whatever made you act that way to the Lord Jesus? an' what did you have to do to get ready for the Place?"

Mr. Black took Pete on his knee, and pulling the chairs close up to him, he said: "Sit down, Jinks, and Tom lad, come here." Then, with a tenderness that the boys had never seen about him before, he spoke of his great fall.

"It was touchin' and tastin' the first drop of strong drink that so nearly ruined me." "You don't catch me touchin' the stuff," Tom said warmly.

"Nor I neither," Jinks added. Pete listened silently with a troubled look on his face.

"You asked me why I treated the Lord Jesus so," Mr. Black continued. "It was because I had allowed Satan to come into my heart, and the Lord Jesus had gone out."

"Whoever is Satan?" Jinks asked. "He is the evil one, who as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour," Mr. Black answered.

"David would have fixed him, if he'd come across him," Tom said confidently, and then, as clearly as he could, Mr. Black told our story,—I mean the story of our sin, and disobedience, of the sentence of death that was passed upon us, and about how the Lord Jesus died in our place.

"We must have on the white robe of his righteousness, when he comes," he said, "or the Lord Jesus can't take us to the Place, into which nothing soiled or unclean is allowed to enter."

Tom looked doubtfully down at his soiled, torn garments. "Will he bring the robes with him, when he comes?" he asked. Mr. Black explained that it was the heart and life which must be made clean from every spot and stain of sin.

"I'd like that kind," Jinks said earnestly, and then somehow, the boys never quite knew how it was, they joined themselves kneeling round Mr. Black, and he was asking the Lord Jesus to wash them and make them clean.

"I'm done," Tom exclaimed, jumping to his feet, with a shining face. "He heard me, as soon as ever I axed him," Jinks said more quietly, while Pete with glad, happy tears confessed his Lord in a simple "Thank you, Lord Jesus."

"You must go to work now, and help other boys to find the way to the Place," Mr. Black said. "Are we to take all the fellers into the Chart?" Tom asked in a rather doubtful voice.

"Don't you want others to know and love your Lord Jesus?" Mr. Black asked quietly. "He will ask you when he comes how many people you have helped." "Oh dear, we must hurry then," Pete said eagerly. "I'd feel awful mean to say as I'd never told one single feller."

"I'd feel just like not lookin' him in the face," Jinks said soberly. "An' I guess I'd sneak off an' not see him at all." It was Tom who made this last remark.

(To be continued)

ELOQUENT RAGS.

TALKING about the way boys were admitted to his Home, Dr. Barnardo said to an interviewer: "I was standing at my front door one bitter day in winter, when a little ragged chap came up to me and asked me for an order for admission. To test him, I pretended to be rather rough with him."

"How do I know," I said, "if what you tell me is true? Have you any friends to speak for you?"

"Friends!" he shouted. "No, I aint got no friends; but if these 'ere rags—and he waved his arm about as he spoke—"won't speak for me, nothing else will."

When we seek admission to the heavenly home above, we shall not be so badly off as this poor boy, for we shall have a friend to speak for us—the one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. As for our righteousness, they are as "filthy rags," which need not, and should not, be mentioned. Our hope is not in these, but in Christ's righteousness, which pleads for us.—*The Quiver*.

TWO GOOD HANDS.

WHEN I was a boy, I became especially interested in the subject of inheritances. I was particularly anxious to know what my father's inheritance was; so one day, after thinking about the matter a good while very seriously, I ventured to ask him. And this was his reply:

"My inheritance? I will tell you what it was—two good hands and an honest purpose to make the best use of the power in my hands and of the time God gave me." Though it is now many years since, I can remember distinctly the tones of my father's voice as he spoke, with both of his hands uplifted to give emphasis to his words. Many a boy does not receive a large inheritance of money or lands; but every one has a pair of good hands, which are better than thousands of money. And the good purpose to make the best use of them is in every boy's power. Remember this wise injunction, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."